



Background of the Study

PIRLS was first conducted in 2001, when 34 countries and the United States joined together to design a study that could be used as the basis for keeping track of future trends in reading achievement. The PIRLS assessment was developed by the participating countries and will provide a way for countries to compare the reading achievement of their primary school students to the achievement of students from other countries. The study is scheduled to be done every 5 years so that trends in reading achievement around the world can be tracked.

In 2006, nearly 50 countries will participate. To make sure that information from different nations can be compared, it is important that all participating countries select scientific samples of schools and students and have a very high rate of participation. Therefore, in order for the study to be a success, it is important for the schools and students selected for the study in the United States to participate.

PIRLS is coordinated by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). In the U.S., PIRLS is sponsored by the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education.

Which Countries Are Participating in PIRLS 2006?

The United States will be one of about 50 countries scheduled to participate in PIRLS 2006.

 Albania	 Kuwait
 Austria	 Latvia
 Belarus	 Lithuania
 Belgium	 Macedonia
 Bulgaria	 Moldova
 Canada	 Morocco
 China	 Netherlands
 Chinese Taipei (Taiwan)	 New Zealand
 Czech Republic	 Nicaragua
 Denmark	 Norway
 Egypt	 Poland
 England	 Qatar
 Estonia	 Romania
 France	 Russian Federation
 Georgia	 Scotland
 Germany	 Singapore
 Hong Kong	 Slovak Republic
 Hungary	 Slovenia
 Iceland	 South Africa
 Indonesia	 Spain
 Iran	 Sweden
 Israel	 Trinidad & Tobago
 Italy	 United States
	 Zimbabwe

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study



What Is PIRLS?

PIRLS is an international study of the reading literacy of 4th grade students. It is designed to answer several questions:

- How well do 4th grade students read?
- Do students value and enjoy reading?
- How are young children taught to read?
- How do the reading habits, attitudes, and instructional experiences of students in the United States compare with students in other countries worldwide?

PIRLS 2006 will collect information on the reading achievement of young children and the experiences they have learning to read. PIRLS will provide valuable comparative information about children's levels of reading literacy that can be used to improve instruction and learning.

What Does PIRLS Entail?

Students participating in PIRLS will spend approximately 2 hours completing a test and questionnaire.

Teachers and school administrators will also be asked to complete a 30-minute questionnaire.

Framework

The test is carefully constructed to assess a range of reading comprehension strategies for two major reading purposes—reading for literary experience and reading to acquire and use information. The assessment includes reading passages followed by open-ended and multiple-choice format questions about the text. Different versions of the assessment will be used to allow PIRLS to report results for more assessment items than can fit in one booklet, without making the assessment longer.

The questionnaire gathers information about the contexts in which children learn to read and children's attitudes toward reading.

Results

Results and examples of items from PIRLS 2006 will be available in December 2007.

For More Information

For questions about PIRLS 2006, contact the PIRLS hotline at 1-877-225-0771 or send an e-mail to PIRLS@rti.org. You may also visit our website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/>.



Reading literacy is one of the most important abilities students acquire as they progress through their early school years and is the foundation for all other studies.

Results of PIRLS will give us the earliest indication of how well our students are performing; it is timed to measure student reading at the point when reading is required for further learning.

Findings from PIRLS 2001

- U.S. 4th grade students perform better than the international averages on both the literary and informational subscales.
- Fourth grade girls score higher than 4th grade boys on both the literary and informational subscales in all participating PIRLS 2001 countries.
- Thirty-five percent of U.S. 4th graders report reading for fun every day or almost every day. This was less than the international average of 40%.
- Based on teacher reporting, 65% of U.S. 4th graders receive more than 6 hours of reading instruction per week. The international average is 28%.